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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQI ISLAMIC PARTY CHIEF: ELECTIONS ON TRACK;  
BROAD MALIKI COALITION UNLIKELY

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR GARY A. GRAPPO FOR REASONS  
1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: Iraqi Islamic Party leader Osama al-Tikriti believes the Iraqi parliament will soon pass an election law providing for multiple districts and a closed list, and that national elections will occur on schedule in January. He asserted that PM Maliki would not be able to gain broad Sunni participation in his pre-election coalition, but noted that "anything was possible" in the post-election government formation process. Believing the Iraqi political system to be too secular, Tikriti bemoaned the failure of Iraqi leaders to directly engage the public on important issues. End summary.

¶2. (C) During a September 7 meeting with Pol M-C, Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) Secretary General Osama al-Tikriti said he believed Iraq's parliament would adopt election legislation by October and that despite scattered talk of elections being delayed, national voting would occur, as scheduled, on January 16. He acknowledged that an open list voting system (with voters selecting named individual candidates, as opposed to voting for a political party/coalition in a closed list system) was the best option and that it would encourage voters to turn out on election day. However, he noted that open lists were not in the political interest of some established parties, in particular the Kurdish Alliance. (Note: It is widely believed that the closed list would also benefit the Shi'a Iraqi National Alliance (INA). End note). Consequently he expected the law ultimately passed to provide for a closed list with multiple districts.

¶3. (C) Regarding PM Maliki's electoral strategy, Tikriti said that even if Maliki renounced the INA, he would only garner limited Sunni support in trying to form a pre-election coalition. He said that an alternative to Maliki as PM was desirable because of security and "other failures," but that after the election "anything was possible" in terms of creating the eventual governing majority in parliament. Tikriti commented that Maliki had told him that resisting Iran's desire to play a major role in the election and control events in Iraq was at core a nationalist endeavor, rather than a sectarian one. According to Tikriti, Maliki also claimed that "Iran wants to assassinate me." Tikriti said he told Maliki that he was receiving disappointing messages from around the country: "People are languishing in jail; many are living in poverty; schools and hospitals are in serious need of repair." He opined that Maliki had done a poor job of power-sharing; by controlling too many positions, Maliki had created an imbalance that was coming back to haunt him.

¶4. (C) Tikriti criticized the Iraqi political process as deeply flawed because political leaders refused to give up their sectarian ways, including those within his own party. He said there was an absence of leaders who talked directly to the Iraqi people and explained the issues. He attributed this shortcoming to a mindset from the Saddam era, which accepted strong-armed rule that was distant from the public.

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